

# SPEECH

OF

MR. MILLER, OF NEW JERSEY,

ON

THE MEXICAN WAR,

AND

THE MODE OF BRINGING IT TO A SPEEDY AND HONORABLE  
CONCLUSION.

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DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 2, 1847.

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The bill making further appropriations to bring the existing war with Mexico to a speedy and honorable conclusion, being under consideration.

Mr. MILLER said—

This bill is urged upon our consideration by the same reasons which have been pressed upon us for the adoption of every measure connected with the Mexican war—that the President asks for it, and that it will be the means of procuring a speedy and honorable peace.

If I believed that the passage of this bill would produce this result, I would cheerfully vote for it. Three millions of dollars would be a cheap sacrifice to rid the country of this unfortunate war.

But along with this proposition, the chairman of Foreign Relations, speaking, as I suppose, by authority from the Executive, has told us how this money is to be used, and has given us the terms of the peace which it is to procure. We are informed, that this money is to be used in some way, not clearly defined, to induce the Mexican authorities, or some portion of the Mexican people who are inclined to be friendly towards us, to consent to certain terms of peace, to be dictated by the President of the United States. These terms are, that Mexico shall, by way of indemnity to us for the expense of the war, cede to the United States New Mexico and Upper California. Upon these terms, and upon these terms alone, the Senator tells us the Executive ought to consent to make peace with Mexico.

We have now for the first time, from an official source, the information which the country has long desired to obtain, viz: to what extent, and for what purposes this war is to be further prosecuted.

It is to dismember the Republic of Mexico, and to annex two of her provinces to the United States. This war, then, which we have been so frequently assured by the Executive, was forced upon us by Mexico, and only prosecuted by him "in vindication of our rights and in defence of our territory," is now to be converted into a war of aggression and of conquest on our part. These objects are now openly avowed before the world. It matters not that these provinces are to be acquired through the means and under the

Towers, printer, opp. National Intel. office.

sanction of a treaty, for we all know that such treaty is to be extorted from Mexico by means of the further prosecution of the war; and that, if she abandons her claim to Texas, and surrenders two more of her provinces at our dictation, it will be only to save the entire republic from being subjugated by our arms.

Called upon, day after day, to vote men and money—the lives and property of my fellow-citizens—to sustain a war, for the origin of which I thank God I am in no way responsible, and over the continuance of which I regret that I have but little if any control, I feel it due to myself, and to those who have honored me with a seat on this floor, to take this occasion to express plainly, but fearlessly, my views and feelings upon all the subjects connected with the Mexican war. I will, therefore, proceed to notice the character of this war, the importance it has assumed to the country, the causes which led to it, and the manner in which it has been conducted; and then suggest to the Senate a few considerations in regard to what I consider the mode of bringing it to a speedy and honorable termination.

Whatever might have been said, as to the existence of a *state of war* between the Republic of Mexico and the United States, on the 11th of May last, the day on which the President sent his war message to Congress, all must admit that war exists now. And whether it exists by the act of Mexico or by the act of the President of the United States, the country is, nevertheless, compelled to bear its burdens, suffer its evils, and encounter its hazards, until those who control its issue shall be induced or compelled to restore peace to the country. If I believed that, by withholding the supplies necessary to sustain this war, honorable peace might be restored to my country, I would, at all hazards to myself, vote against them all. But this war is now beyond my control—commencing in the will or by a blunder of the Executive, it has proceeded step by step, under the management of those who now direct our political affairs, connecting itself with the legislation of the country in every form, in opposition as I believe, to the will of a majority of the people, and in defiance of the terms of the constitution itself, until it has fastened itself upon the country in such a manner, so that even those who disprove its origin, and do not approve of its objects, are now compelled, for the sake of the honor of their country, to give it their support by voting the necessary supplies.

Yes sir, this little war, brought upon the country with little thought, and with less preparation, grows larger and larger as time advances. The enemy, retiring before our victorious armies, seems to gather new strength from every defeat. A year ago, Mexico, divided in her councils, distracted in her domestic affairs, without means, and without credit to sustain a war, appeared to lie before us like the lamb before the lion. We had but to seize and devour. But the devoted victim seems to gather strength from every wound we inflict; its blood, like that of the patriots, shed in defence of home and firesides, becomes the life-blood of the nation, and rallies an hundred freemen to avenge the death of one. All Mexico is in arms to resist your invasion; every mountain pass is defended by her citizen soldiers. The road to the city of Mexico grows longer and more difficult as we advance, and the promised “revels in the halls of the Montezumas” have been preceded by many a carnival of blood. That peace which we were to conquer by the first of November, flies before our invading army like an *ignus fatuus*, and it is now further from our grasp than it was on the day we crossed the Nueces.

It is now evident to all that this war has assumed a serious and momentous aspect. It has got beyond the control of mere cabinet management; not to be settled by an intrigue with an outlawed Mexican general—by paper conquests of nonresisting towns and defenceless provinces—by proclamations of annexation prepared at Washington, and repeated from the quarter-decks of our ships of war on the coast of California, or upon the mountain tops in New Mexico.

No sir, all these devices of bloodless conquests have passed away, like the dreams of the night. We are now waking up to the realities of the war. Its burdens are beginning to be felt; its calamities are falling thick and heavy; already is your treasury exhausted; already have thousands of your patriotic soldiers fallen either by the sword or disease; and the sick and the wounded are daily returning to remind us of the desolations of war.

Now comes urgent calls for more troops and for money to pay them. The treasury is empty, new loans must be resorted to. The national debt is accumulating to a fearful amount. New and heavy taxes must be laid, or your national credit will be crushed beneath the burdens of this war.

If this war be continued for another year, it will require all the power and energy of this nation to be exerted to their full extent, in order to conduct it with vigor and success.

We have already authorized the President to receive into the service fifty thousand volunteers. We have increased our regular army to twenty-seven thousand men.

This army of 87,000 men is to be employed in a foreign country, at a distance of about three thousand miles. Its line of operations extend from Tampico, on the Gulf, to San Francisco, on the Pacific, embracing sixteen degrees of latitude. The furthest point in this line, upon a strait course drawn from this Capitol, is distant 4,000 miles, and only to be approached by a voyage of 15,000 miles, by the way of Cape Horn. In order to occupy this extended line, our forces have been divided into four divisions. One division, and the largest, is upon the Gulf, one upon the upper Rio Grande, another at Santa Fe, and the fourth is, I hardly know where, being yet afloat upon the high seas around the world, but destined, wind and waves permitting, to take possession of Upper California.

All the munitions of war and the supplies for these several armies are to be drawn from the United States, to be carried by land over deserts, and through a wild and savage wilderness.

No one can anticipate the difficulties, nor estimate the expenses of such an army. They can only be realized when we come to settle up the account of this war.

We may, however, in some degree, anticipate the amount by the expenditures already made. From the best information I can get, I am satisfied that the first year of this war will cost us about \$100,000,000.

At the last session we appropriated for the army alone, as follows:

By the act of the 13th May	-	-	\$10,000,000
By the act of the 20th June	..	-	12,000,000
By the act of the 8th August	-	-	2,200,000

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\$24,200,000



We have raised, by loans made expressly to meet our war expenses, as follows :

By act of the 20th July	-	-	-	\$10,000,000
By act passed at this session	-	-	-	23,000,000
We have also consumed the surplus in the				
Treasury when the war commenced	-			12,000,000
The necessary appropriation bills now on our				
table, to be passed at this session, will, I un-				
derstand, amount to about	-	-	-	50,000,000

I have thus stated the nature of the war, and the enormous, yet necessary, expense attending its prosecution, for the purpose of calling the attention of the country to them, and then to ask the conductors of this war how they expect to meet and pay these accumulating expenditures.

It is an easy matter to get a country into war. A blunder, an indiscretion, may do this. A hasty order from the War Department, directing your army to take an extreme position, may bring on the collision. But it is a different matter to conduct that war with ability and vigor, after it is made. It then requires other facilities, and higher powers of intellect, in order to sustain the country under its burdens, and to conduct the nation safely through all its hazards, back to honorable peace. These facilities, these powers, have not, in my opinion, been exhibited by the authors of this war. They seem to think that they have performed their whole duty by bringing the war upon the country. That being done, they leave the war to take care of itself, to fight its own way, and, finally, to pay itself in Mexican provinces.

The great question in all wars, conducted by civilized nations, is, how are the ways and means necessary to sustain the war to be raised ?

The two great means of war are men and money—the lives and property of the citizens. These constitute the food of war; without them it cannot be sustained. All experience has shown that war never fails for the want of the soldier to fight the battles of his country. The great difficulty is *the money*. That is the difficulty which now embarrasses the conductors of the war with Mexico. How to raise the money, is the question.

Will you raise it by a sufficient tax from the people, and thus let them feel at once the burden of the war? or will you resort to credit, and throw the burdens upon those who follow after you? If you feel that the people will not submit to be taxed to sustain your war, you will resort to the latter mode. But if you have confidence in the justice and necessity of the war—if you believe that the hearts of the people are in it—that it is in truth a war in defence of our national rights, made to resist invasion, and to revenge “American blood shed upon American soil,” you cannot, you ought not, to doubt their patriotism, by supposing that they are unwilling to make the sacrifice.

It appears to me that this Administration have shown a little want of nerve upon this point. They were bold and reckless in bringing on the war; loud and clamorous against all who do not justify the act. Yet, when called upon to meet the responsibility of taxing the people to sustain the war, they become timid, cautious, and silent.

We have frequent calls from the Executive for men and money, but not a word about taxes. The Democracy will submit to anything but that. They will vote loans by millions—create a national debt to any amount; they will give up their cherished theory of “a hard money currency,” and embrace a circulating medium of suspended Government paper. In short, they will do

almost any thing the President may ask, except consent to be taxed for the support of this war.

We have splendid schemes of conquest ; all Mexico is to be subjugated to our arms. Yet the Democracy is to be permitted to drink its tea and sip its coffee, all free and taxless. Our tax-gatherers are to be in Mexico. Mexico is to be conquered, and her people made to pay for their own subjugation. Our army, in its march, is to be supported by contributions upon the enemy, and after the war is over, the balance of the account is to be satisfied by taking to ourselves two or more Mexican provinces.

This mode of carrying on a taxless war, takes us back to the Goths and Huns. Attila thundered at the gates of Rome, exacted contributions from its timid citizens, and, after paying the expenses of his invasion with Roman money and Roman provinces, retired, but to recruit his army for another aggression.

Although a year has now nearly passed since this war commenced, and two sessions of Congress have passed, there has been no change made in our system of finance, for the purpose of meeting the expenses of the war. This policy is unparalleled in the history of any country. At the commencement of the last war, the party then in power met the contingency at once, openly and manfully. So soon as war was declared the existing duties on foreign imports, although much higher than they are now, were immediately doubled. I undertake to predict that the honor and credit of the country cannot be sustained in war under the present system of finance. It will be found inefficient even in time of peace, but in a state of war it will prove to be utterly incompetent to maintain the credit of the Government. What is the system?

It is, 1st. A reduction of duties so as to bring the revenue down to the wants of *an economical administration in time of peace.*

2d. Free trade, which has for its object the abolition of all duties upon foreign imports.

3d. A hard money currency by means of the sub-treasury.

All these measures were concocted in time of peace, and although forced upon the country after the war commenced, no one will pretend that they were suggested by the war. We all know that these measures were intended to carry out certain political theories, long indulged in by one political party in this country. I know it has been said that the Tariff bill of 1846 will produce more revenue than that of 1842. But this is an after thought, not true in fact, and contradicted by the President in his message recommending the adoption of that measure.

Under this system of low duties, free trade, and no credit, we are to carry on a foreign war—a war at the distance of from three to five thousand miles ; its object the subjugation of eight millions of people—its expenditures at the rate of \$100,000,000 per year.

Is there a nation on the face of the earth that would rely upon such a system as this to sustain its credit in such a war ?

A war of this character will cost the United States much more than it would one of the monarchies of Europe. They have their standing armies constantly in the field ; their large naval and military establishments constantly prepared for war, and may at any time, employ them in foreign campaigns, without the extravagance which must always attend a new and sudden preparation for war. But not so with this government ; a state of war, or the preparation for it, has not been our policy.

The forms of our institution do not contemplate a foreign war for conquest. A war of defence we can carry on against the world in arms, and at less comparative expense ; for every freeman is ready to give his blood and property in defence of his country ; but a war of aggression, I repeat, will cost this government more than it would any other nation upon the face of the earth. We are giants in defence, but pigmies in aggression.

We have been frequently taunted, on this side of the chamber, with not giving a hearty support to the war ; with an unwillingness to assist the administration to carry it on vigorously. Sir, as the administration made this war without asking our consent, and as the gentlemen on the other side of the chamber seem to take it under there special keeping, we, being in the minority, might have justified ourselves to the country by withholding our active support. But we have not done so ; we have forgotten the cause of the war in the recollection that the honor and welfare of our country were at stake, and have voted all the supplies asked for by the administration.

Having done this, we now have the the right, and with more justice, too, to turn about and say to you and to the administration, you have neglected to prepare the country for a vigorous prosecution of this war ; instead of calling upon the people of this country to pledge their property to sustain the war, you have gone upon credit ; you have relied upon borrowing ; you have attempted to push your credit to the utmost extreme ; and in the very first year of the war, your chief officer of finance, with all his ingenuity, is at his wit's end as to how he shall raise money. You preferred your own political theories, which you have been preparing for the last fifteen years for a time of peace, and you will not now give them up in time of war ; you will not give up your sub-treasury, though every iron chest in it holds nothing but your promises to pay ; you will not levy a tax for fear it will disturb your prettily contrived schemes ; you adhere to party measures notwithstanding the emergency which calls upon you to lay aside party feelings.

I throw back the charge upon those who originated the war ; they, not we, have failed to prosecute the war with vigor, by not performing their duty to the country in preparing the finances of the government to meet the emergency created by themselves.

I have thus referred to the expense of the war and to the neglect of the administration in providing the means to meet them, not for the purpose of finding fault or casting censure upon any one, but for the higher purpose of calling the attention of the country to the difficulties and dangers attending the prosecution of a war like that which we are now engaged in.

I now desire to say a word or two about the manner in which the military part of this war has been conducted. I do not agree with gentleman here, that it is the duty of the Executive, upon his own responsibility, to plan the campaign for our armies. I doubt whether either the President or his Secretary has the capacity, natural or acquired, for the performance of such a duty. However that may be, it is now understood, that this, the first and *grand campaign* against Mexico, was planned, and has since been controlled, entirely by the Executive. To understand its merits, it is necessary to look a little into its details.

The avowed object of the campaign is to "conquer a speedy peace." To accomplish this, a blow must be struck at the heart of Mexico ; march to the halls of Montezumas, and there dictate a peace. Now let us see how



the Executive undertakes to accomplish this result. What are his military movements?

He commences by surrounding Mexico with our naval and military forces, like the waters surround the continent. The army is divided into four divisions. Three of these divisions are placed as far off from the point where this speedy peace is to be conquered as he could well get them, where, instead of being able to strike at the heart of Mexico, they are obliged to contend with the wilderness, and fight for their own subsistence. Part of our navy commands the Gulf, but for no purpose, as yet developed, but to contend with winds, and to afford a safe passport to Santa Anna. Another part sails up and down the defenceless coasts of the Pacific. Its commanders employed in making constitutions and establishing civil governments for Mexico and citizens for the United States. This is a general view of this grand Executive peace conquering campaign. The policy of that plan depends altogether upon the object its author had in view. If the object be peace, the mode he has adopted is directly opposite of that which he should have adopted to accomplish that object. But if his purpose be to dismember Mexico of her provinces, and not peace, then his campaign has been wisely planned.

We have had many schemes for conducting the war. We hear of them daily. You hardly meet a man of military pretensions in the streets who has not his plan for conquering Mexico; but I confess that the President's plan for conquering speedy peace, by striking at the heart of Mexico, when he places the forces which are to strike the blow a thousand miles from striking distance, is the most remarkable of them all.

If the President's object was peace, and nothing else, he should have concentrated our forces at the most vulnerable point, supplied them in time with proper munitions of war and the necessary means of transportation, struck a decided blow at the heart of Mexico, and then said to the government of that Republic, now we are willing to make peace by settling the two causes which led to the war, viz: the boundary line of Texas, and indemnity to our citizens. If this had been done, we would had peace before to-day. But instead of adopting these effective means, he scattered our forces over remote and defenceless provinces—wasted our means in useless enterprises—sent a colonizing army to Upper California—employed our naval and military commanders in annexing Mexican territory to the United States; thus publishing to Mexico, and all the world, that his object was not peace, but to despoil that Republic of her territories.

The people of Mexico, seeing your object, have united in defence of their native soil. They now stand in every mountain pass to resist your *invading* army. They, too, in common with our Executive, have forgotten the cause of the war in the imminent danger that now threatens their national existence. So strong is that feeling now in Mexico, that we are told the government dare not even entertain a proposition for peace, connected in any way with a surrender of any portion of her territory to the United States; that her people will rebel against a proposition of that kind, and at once hurl from power the Executive who may be reckless enough to sell or surrender any portion of the territory of his country.

The President of the United States, aware of the difficulties attending a treaty of peace with Mexico, predicated upon a surrender of two of her provinces, now proposes that we shall place in his hands \$3,000,000, to

be used by him to sustain the Executive of Mexico in making such a treaty, against the apprehended indignation of the people of that republic.

I can understand the proposition now made through the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations in no other way. That honorable Senator has told us, that "the intelligence possessed by the President gave them reason to believe that, upon a certain advance to be made to them to pay the expenses of their army, and other expenses, they would be willing to cede that portion of their country which he had named."

"That we had got possession of a large part of their territory; we had got possession of some of their seaports, and held others blockaded. We were powerful, and in a condition to force contributions, and every one in Mexico, or at least the greater number, were desirous of concluding a peace."

I also understand from what that Senator said, and from what I now hear from other quarters, that the object of this advancement is to keep the army and people of Mexico quiet until a treaty can be made.

Thus, sir, we have this new scheme for obtaining a speedy and honorable peace with Mexico fairly presented to the world.

Its programme when reduced to writing, is this. Our Executive proposes as his ultimatum—that we will make peace, if Mexico will cede to the United States New Mexico and Upper California.

Santa Anna replies—I cannot entertain the proposition, for if I should do so, my army would revolt, and the people of Mexico would hurl me from power before we could complete the bargain. The President replies—I have thought of the difficulties of your position, and in order to overcome them, I will advance you \$3,000,000, with which, if you are the man I take you to be, you can retain the allegiance of the army until a treaty can be ratified.

That Santa Ana, or some other good friend of the President, will take the money, I have no doubt. But, that we shall procure peace, honorable peace, by such a devious course as this, no one can seriously believe.

It will be a peace tainted with bribery and treachery. It may answer the purposes of our administration—it may gratify the cupidity of Santa Ana—but its bribery will bring dishonor upon our name, while its treachery will excite every patriot in Mexico to a fiercer renewal of the war.

Sir, I will have nothing to do with such a scheme as this. I believe the attempts to procure peace by such means will prove abortive; and if successful, will bring nothing but disgrace upon our fair name. That if the money is paid, it will go into the hands of some traitor in Mexico, who will be as ready to cheat us as he was to betray his own country.

It looks very much as if the two millions asked for at the last session had been wanted then, to get Santa Ana *into* Mexico, and that the three millions are now required to get him *out*.

The only honorable way to settle our difficulties with Mexico, is to go back to the causes of the war. These causes are recent, they are well understood, and, in my judgment, susceptible of a speedy and honorable adjustment. Before the commencement of this unfortunate war, there existed but two matters of serious difficulty between Mexico and the United States:

1st. The annexation of Texas.

2d. The unredressed injuries inflicted by Mexico on the persons and property of our citizens.

The President in his message of the 2d of December, 1845, states these to be the only serious causes of misunderstanding between the two Governments.



As to the first, he says, that on the 6th of March, 1845, the Mexican Minister protested against the joint resolution of Congress for the annexation of Texas to the United States, which he regarded as a violation of the rights of Mexico, and demanded his passports. That, from that time, Mexico had assumed an hostile attitude, and broke of all diplomatic intercourse with the United States. That, on account of the hostile attitude Mexico had assumed towards the United States, "he," the President, "deemed it proper, as a precautionary measure, to order a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico, and to concentrate an efficient military force on the western frontier of Texas." He then says, "but though our army and navy were placed in a position to defend our own and the rights of Texas, they were ordered to commit no act of hostility against Mexico, unless she declared war, or was herself the aggressor by striking the first blow." Thus stood the first cause of difference on the 2d of December, 1845.

As to the second cause of difference, the President states it in substance as follows: That we had frequently complained of the injuries inflicted upon the persons and property of our citizens, and asked redress. That Mexico admitted the justice of our claim to a certain extent, but neglected to make satisfaction. That after much delay, a treaty of indemnity was concluded on the 11th of April, 1839. That, under this treaty a commission was organized at Washington on the 25th of August, 1840, who adjudicated claims in favor of our citizens to the amount of \$2,026,139 68. That, for want of time other claims, amounting to between three and four millions were left undisposed of. That Mexico then asked for further indulgence, and we granted it. That on the 13th of January, 1843, a new treaty was concluded, and by the terms of which it was provided.

1st. That the interest due on the award made under the treaty of the 11th of April, 1839, should be paid on the 13th of April, 1843; and that the principal and interest arising thereon should be paid in five years, in equal instalments every three months, to commence on the 13th of April 1843.

The President states, "that the interest due on the 13th of April, 1843, and the three first of the twenty instalments have been paid, leaving seventeen unpaid, seven of which were then due.

By this statement it appears that our claims for indemnity against Mexico had been made the subject of friendly adjustment under several treaties, and that the whole amount of these claims which had been adjudicated under these treaties was the sum of \$2,126,139 68, and that of this amount there was only due and unpaid on the 2d of December, 1845, seven instalments amounting to the sum of \$769,142. Thus stood the second cause of difference on the 5th of December, 1845.

The President also informs us, in the same message—that on the 10th of November, 1846, he sent Mr. Slidell to Mexico, "clothed with full powers to adjust and definitely settle all pending differences between the two countries, including those of boundary between Mexico and the State of Texas."

I have thus particularly referred to this message for the purpose of showing, in the first place, that at the time negotiations were interrupted between the two governments, and up to the time our army was directed to take a position on the Río Grande, the difficulties between us and Mexico were not of such a character as to justify war between sister republics; secondly, that the war which has arisen out of them, might, and ought to

have been prevented ; and thirdly, that there is no difficulty in putting an end to it now, if our government will direct its exertions to an honorable and just settlement of the causes of difference which led to the war. The attempt which has lately been made to magnify our grievances by a renewal of bygone disputes and forgotten insult, may tend to ease the conscience of the promoters of this war, but it must fail to satisfy the world, that there were any other causes for its existence but the two I have named.

We all know that this war was a surprise upon the nation. We were in it before we were aware of its necessity. How, and by whom it was brought on is still an unsettled question. Its paternity is unacknowledged—its existence is that of a *nullius filius*, the child of nobody, to be supported by the nation at large. Mexico denies that she brought on the war ; our President affirms that he did not ; Congress has never declared it ; all we know is that *war exists*. Even now we vote the necessary supplies under a protest, and are not permitted to express thanks to our gallant officers and men for glorious victories won, without accompanying those thanks with a disavowal of the very war in which they were achieved.

Whence this hesitation, this quivering and shaking, whenever we touch upon the authorship of this war. Does it not arise from the fact that there is doubt lurking even in the minds of those who brought it upon the country, as to its necessity or justice. Or does the administration begin to see in the signs of the times, that the day is fast approaching when they will be called to answer at the bar of public opinion, for the millions of money, and thousands of lives sacrificed in the prosecution of a war, which, if they did not bring on, it was their duty to have prevented.

There was no overruling necessity for this war. It might have been avoided, if the President had exercised that prudence and foresight becoming the Chief Magistrate of the nation in an emergency of peace and war.

I believe, and I think every Senator here believes now, that if the President had, before our army was thrown in collision with the enemy by means of his order to cross the Nueces, submitted the whole case to Congress, who has the sole power to make war under our Constitution, this Mexican war would never had an existence.

But the President did not think proper to take this course. He neglected to consult Congress, until our troops had been brought into collision with the Mexican army—until war had actually been made. And even then, if the party in power had given proper time for that deliberation which the importance of the occasion demanded, this Executive war would have ended with the victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and our army would never have crossed the Rio Grande to invade and conquer Mexico. Whether the President is responsible for having commenced this war or not, is a question which I suppose will only be settled by history. But we all have our opinions now ; I beg leave to express mine in a single sentence.

If taking possession of a territory, claimed by, and in the actual possession of another, with an armed force competent to drive out its inhabitants, and hold the country, and then directing that armed force to take a hostile position within gun shot of a city belonging to the adversary, is not actual war, it is certainly doing that which the President ought to have known, under the state of feeling then existing between the parties, would inevitably lead to war.

But though the President may be responsible for bringing on the war at the time and in the manner in which it was brought on, there are others who are equally responsible to the country for producing the state of things out of which our difficulties with Mexico have arisen. These difficulties were produced by two hasty, and as I believe, by two unconstitutional acts committed by our government. The first was, the annexation of Texas to the Union by means of a joint resolution of Congress. The second was, the sending our army into Texas, before it was a part of the United States. In the first act this Senate participated. We on this side of the chamber opposed that measure as both unconstitutional and vicious, as a measure that would not only lead to war with Mexico, but also endanger the peace and welfare of the Union at home. All that we said on that occasion has been, or is about to be, fulfilled; war with Mexico; lust for the acquisition of territory; extension of slavery over other Mexican provinces; internal dissensions, have all followed in quick succession that unlawful and reckless deed. But my object in referring to that act now, is for another purpose. It is well known that the Texas resolutions could not have passed the Senate without the amendment which gave to the President the discretion either to submit the resolutions of annexation to Texas, or to proceed by negotiation and treaty.

The object of this amendment was to enable the President to settle by treaty the boundary line between Texas and Mexico, and to prevent, by liberal policy on our part, any difficulties that might arise out of the annexation of Texas to the United States. It was this feature in the resolution that overcome the conscientious scruples of the Senator from Alabama, (Mr. BAGBY.) We were assured that the Executive would adopt the Treaty mode, and without that assurance the resolution would not have passed.

But what was the result? Why, the then Executive, (Mr. TYLER,) immediately adopted the simple resolutions of annexation, and sent them post haste to Texas, for the concurrence of that Government. The present Executive coming into power soon after, approved of the course of his predecessor, and immediately sent our army into Texas, and our Navy to the Gulf, in order to enforce and defend by arms that which it was his duty to have settled and adjusted by treaty.

I do not intend to say that Mexico had the absolute right to interfere with the annexation of Texas to the United States, or that we were bound to consult her upon that subject. But knowing as we did the excited feelings of Mexico, arising out of the peculiar circumstances attending the revolution and independence of Texas; knowing, also, that Texas included within her declared boundaries territories then in the actual possession of the people of Mexico, we owed it to our own peace, we owed it to the feelings and honor of Mexico, to that state of honor and amity which had always existed between us and our sister republic, we owed it to the opinion of the world, to act in a spirit of forbearance towards Mexico, and to adjust these difficulties upon terms of the broadest liberality.

Had this policy been adopted the country would have been saved the expense and calamity of this war.

But this is passed, and I will leave the President, and those who trusted to his discretion, to settle the matter between them.

In adjusting disputes between individuals or nations, it is important, in the first place, to ascertain clearly and distinctly, the real matters of difference



between the parties. This being done, if the parties be honest in their claims, and sincerely desirous of putting an end to the controversy, there can be but little difficulty in making peace between them, unless one of the parties, thinking he has the advantage of his adversary in the present position of the quarrel, or in his superior ability to prosecute it to extremes, demands something beyond what was embraced in the original dispute, something by way of indemnity to himself or of punishment to his opponent.

So, Mr. President, in the present controversy between us and Mexico ; if the parties desire peace, and nothing but honorable peace, there can, in my humble opinion, be no difficulty in obtaining it, if we would but direct our attention solely and steadily to the causes which led to the war, and settle them, without regard to any ulterior advantages.

And now I beg leave to put this question to the Senate, and through the Senate to the Executive, who holds the issue of peace or war in his hands : are you willing to make peace by a just and honorable settlement of the two causes which led to the war ? Are you willing to say to Mexico, in plain English, or in any other language that she may understand, that if she will acknowledge our boundary to the Rio Grande, and pay the indemnities justly due to our citizens, this war shall be at an end ? I regret to say that the President has anticipated an answer to these interrogatories by what has been communicated to us to-day, through the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. The President is not willing to make peace by a just and honorable settlement of all the causes of difference between the two nations. He is not willing to put an end to the war, though Mexico yield all her own grievances and claims, and give us all we demanded at the time the war commenced. He has now other objects and motives for the prosecution of the war than those which were avowed on the 5th of December, 1845, and on the 11th of May, 1846. Grotius, in speaking of the causes of war, draws a distinction between what he calls "*the justifying reasons* and the motives for the war." The former being that which is assigned to the world, and the latter that which exists in the mind of the war-maker. Thus, in the war of Alexander against Darius, to take vengeance of the Persians for the injuries they had done the Greeks was the justifying reason, whilst the motive was a strong desire of glory, empire, and riches. When history comes to record the causes of this war, I fear she will be compelled to write that the justifying reason assigned to the world was to "avenge American blood shed upon American soil," whilst the real motive was a strong desire to obtain two or more Mexican provinces.

But to return. The President's object, as we have been told to-day, in the further prosecution of this war, is to obtain indemnity for the expenses of the war ; in other words, it is to punish Mexico by compelling her to pay damages ; the amount to be taxed by the President, and which he has already estimated to be of the value of New Mexico and California.

As the real objects of this war are disclosed, as the motives of its authors are brought out from the dark recesses of the cabinet into open daylight, how they will chill the ardor and disappoint the hopes of our patriotic soldiery. Under the solemn assurance of the Executive, that this war had been forced upon us by Mexico, that our only object in continuing it was to resist aggression, and to conquer a peace, our gallant army, volunteers and regulars, have marched wherever you directed them to march, encountering death in every shape ; meeting the enemy wherever they could find

him; fighting three glorious battles, in each victorious, and each more glorious than the former, and in all the battle cry has been, we fight for our country, we strike for peace and not for spoils! But now they are to be told that they are the mere instruments in the hands of the administration, to bring about a state of things in Mexico, under the pressure of which the President may force or bribe that Government to sell to the United States two of her provinces. That Santa Ana who has thus far escaped your vigilant pursuit, is still approachable by the President. That the peace which you have been prevented by the imbecility of the department here from winning by your valor, is now to be purchased with money. And that bribery and treachery, more powerful than valor and arms, is to end this war; thus making its consummation as dishonorable to the country as it will be mortifying to the pride and honor of every true soldier in the army.

The President's views being now fully understood, it becomes an important question for this Senate to decide, whether it will sanction the further prosecution of this war for the purposes avowed. Whether, in this enlightened age, when war is deplored by all good men, and only tolerated in self-defence, this, the proudest and the mightiest republic on earth, shall continue to prosecute a war against a poor and enfeebled sister republic, for the mercenary purpose of despoiling her of her people and territory, in order to pay the expenses of a war, in the making of which we were as much to blame, if not more, than she. Neither the laws of God nor man will justify a nation in continuing a war beyond the point of obtaining redress for the wrongs which occasioned the war. To push it further is vengeance, ambition, or avarice. "An equitable conqueror," says Vattel, "instead of being swayed by ambition and avarice, will make a just estimate of what is due to him, that is of the *very thing that has caused the war*; and if the thing itself is not to be procured \* \* \* he will detain no more of the enemies goods than is precisely the equivalent. These are the conditions which render an acquisition made by armies just and unrepachable before God and our own conscience; justice in the cause, and equality in the satisfaction."

I have entertained the opinion for some time past that the Senate ought, in some way consistent with law and order, express its opinion as to the objects and purposes for which this war should be further prosecuted; and to give to the Executive, in respectful terms, our advice, (asked or unasked) as to the mode and manner in which it should be brought to a speedy and honorable termination. The bill now before us affords an opportunity for the exercise of this solemn duty; and I trust that before this debate is concluded, a proposition of the kind I have referred to will receive the sanction of this body.

I believe, and I think such to be the opinion of the country, that this war may be brought to an honorable termination in ninety days, if Congress will advise the President not to prosecute it for the purpose of acquiring Mexican territory, to be annexed to the United States; and that in his offer of peace to Mexico, he confine his proposition to the adjustment of the causes of difference out of which the war originated. It may be said that we have no right to interfere in this matter, that the President has the sole power of making peace, and that he alone is responsible for the manner of conducting this war. This is true to a certain extent. But Congress has also the sole power of granting the supplies, and the Senate has the power of finally affirming or rejecting any treaty of peace that the President may

think proper to send to us. Besides, the President having assumed the responsibility of making war without the knowledge or consent of Congress, he ought not to complain if we take upon ourselves the humble privilege of advising him to put an end to it. On a late memorable occasion, when the country was in danger of being involved in war with Great Britain relative to the boundary of Oregon, the President thought proper to consult the Senate as to the terms and conditions upon which that controversy should be settled. We did not then stand on formalities in a question of war or peace. We did not say to the President, act upon your own responsibility; but in good faith, we at once gave him our advice; and public opinion accords to the Senate the honor of having saved the peace of the world on that occasion. Our advice now, although unasked, may, I trust, have the like effect; and if rejected by the President, upon him, and upon him alone, will rest the responsibility of continuing the war for the purpose he has avowed.

Mr. President, I believe that nothing but evil, unmitigated evil, will result by the prosecution of this war for the objects now avowed by the President, and that the more successful he is in attaining his object, the more evil he will bring upon this country. Yes; this war of conquest may proceed vigorously and successfully—your army may carry every mountain pass, may storm every height, and give your victorious flag to the breeze from the topmost turret on the halls of the Montezumas, and the military chieftain who shall have accomplished all this, may return, like Cæsar from Gaul, bringing with him, as the trophies of his victories, an hundred subjugated provinces and eight millions of conquered Mexicans, and present them here for our dominion and control. What then, ah! sirs, what then? Then will come the division of the spoils, the partition between the North and the South. Shall the country, which you have achieved at the sacrifice of so much blood and treasure be free; shall there be no “involuntary slavery” there? Or will you divide it into equal tiers of States, extending from the Del Norte to the Pacific, separated all the way by an ideal line, on one side of which the free institutions of the North will march along side of the slave institution of the South on the other, untill they shall both stand together on the shore of the Pacific, and sigh for other lands beyond. These questions must then be met and settled. Already are they agitating the public mind to a fearful extent. The free States, casting aside all party differences, will then stand firmly erect in resistance to the further extension of slavery, while the slave States, equally united, will demand their rights. When that crisis comes, a crisis to be deplored by all good men, your conquered peace in Mexico will become the fierce spirit of discord at home. The war will not be over, but only transferred from Africa to Rome.

But the Senator from Arkansas, (Mr SEVIER,) says, we want more territory, and that he will not be satisfied with any treaty which will give us less than New Mexico and California. For what purpose, I ask him, why should we pay \$3,000,000, and surrender the claims of our citizens to the two millions of indemnities, and take pay in land? Do we want land? Are we so cramped that we cannot live without enlarging the area of the country? Is the valley of the Mississippi worn out? Is the rich and fertile soil there to be forsaken, and our people to go to Mexico to seek new homes? Has the Senator so soon forgotten Oregon; Oregon, that land of fat things; that land of deep rivers and broad vallies; that land for which your President a year ago was willing to fight for, and die for, even up to 54° 40'; or is it, that Ore-



gon having been obtained without war, is too humble a trophy for our ambition; and that we are now to rush, like the bloodhound, into the wilderness, in pursuit of conquests more sanguinary.

We have, during the last year, perfected our title to Oregon, and by it opened a way to our people across the continent to the Pacific; but we have not yet extended our laws and institutions there, by the establishment of a territorial government; when we shall have done so, its capabilities for agriculture, its position for commerce, will develop themselves. Then our citizens may go there in safety; our commerce will then establish its ports and marts on the mighty Pacific; our institutions, our laws, and our religion, will take a stand there, and have their influence, not only on the Pacific coast, but across that ocean, and in the islands of the sea. The great work of building up and sustaining Oregon is before us. It is a work of peace and of civilization. But before we take one step to build up and sustain that Territory, one hundred millions of dollars is to be expended to acquire New Mexico and California. Shall we never stop our acquisitions? When we get New Mexico and California, will we not push our acquisitions further? When the annexation of Texas was urged upon us, we were told that was to round off the boundary of the Union. Thus far we were to go, and no further. But a year has not passed, when by reason of a trifling dispute about two millions of dollars and the settlement of a boundary line, we are thrown into a war, which is not to be settled, says the Senator from Arkansas, until New Mexico and California are ours. If the country will submit to this, and allow aggression after aggression to be carried on to acquire new territory, it will be of very little use to attempt to improve our country at home. We had better cast loose the rein, and let all the energies of the country expend themselves in the acquisition of foreign climes.

But suppose we get New Mexico by conquest, what shall we do with its five hundred thousand inhabitants. Gentlemen seemed to look upon it as a mere acquisition of territory—as the acquisition of so many acres of land or square miles. Why, there were people there; there are citizens of Mexico there. What was proposed to be done with them? I doubt very much whether, under our form of government, you can bring into the United States, by means of conquest, a foreign people and territory. I speak, however, more particularly of people. Can we by conquest, compel the people of another republic to become citizens of the United States? Why, we have proclaimed to the world that no man can be compelled by force of arms to owe allegiance to any country; and that he has the right to throw off his allegiance to any sovereign on earth. Daily we admit hundreds of emigrants from Europe to the rights of citizenship, having long since discarded from our statute books the old doctrine that a man has, in this matter, no right of choice. What, then, I repeat, do you mean to do with these people? Do you, by force of arms intend to compel an entire people to become free citizens of the United States?

But to conclude. This war has been commenced because the blood of American citizens has been shed on American soil—that was the word which went forth through the country, and struck every ear and heart—for that our armies had been marched to and across the Rio Grande, there to right ourselves before the world, and to defend our honor.

Having fully attained these objects, and nobly sustained all the just rights of the country, what honor, what utility can there be in the further prosecution of this war. I can conceive of none, unless it be for that vain-glorious object which I have heard stated here, military renown in Europe. We have been told that though the war had cost us much, we had been fully repaid by the renown which our arms had won; that European nations had forgotten us, but that now they were taught that we could defend both ourselves and our rights. But was it possible that Europe could have forgotten all the glorious deeds of the last war and the war of the Revolution? If all the honor and glory we acquired in contending with one of the greatest military nations on earth, had passed away like a dream, what could this miserable contest with poor, stricken-down Mexico do to establish our renown? I have never been in foreign parts; but if the American name and glory were so low that it was necessary to engage in a war with Mexico to establish them, I never desire to go there, until the character of an American citizen shall be more truly appreciated and understood. But did the power and glory of this Republic depend on deeds of war? No, our glory was derived from achievements of peace. Our enterprise, our institutions, our religion, were our glory and our boast; and when all the renown which could be derived from deeds of arms had passed away, the glory of this country, founded on the great principles of peace and justice, would continue to attract the attention and secure the admiration of the world.